Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta and Bangalore.

(iv) Circulation of draft legislation on Haj Committee to Kerala State Haj Committee before finalisation - The legislative proposals to be enacted in the Bill are under consideration and the new Bill would be introduced after all aspects have been examined.

(c) The total number of Haj pilgrims from Kerala who performed Haj under the auspices of the Central Haj Committee during 1996 was 4588.

Contracts to Indian Companies in African Countries

3451. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any Indian companies were awarded African Development Bank/World Bank multilaterally funded international contracts in African countries located in south of Sahara region during the financial year 1995-96; and

(b) if so, the details of all such contracts awarded in each such African country?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

OBC Recruitment of Group 'D' Staff

3452. SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether candidates, sponsored by the Employment Exchange for Group D post (Peon) in the reserved category of OBC in the Ministry of External Affairs, have been awaiting in queue for their interviews/ selections since long;

(b) whether it is also a fact that according to the latest Government policy, all such reserved vacancies must be filled up within the stipulated time; and

(c) if so, upto which specific date all selection formalities will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The selection formalities have already been completed within the stipulated time. The offers of appointments to selected candidates are under issue.

Agreements Signed with Other Countries

3453. SHRI B. DHARMA BIKSHAM : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the salient features of the agreements/accords signed with various countries during the last six months, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : A statement is enclosed.

STATEMENT

China

1. Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control signed on 29 November, 1996 in New Delhi includes several important confidence building measures and is built upon the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the line of Actual Control which was signed on 7 September, 1993.

2. The agreement concerning the maintenance of the Consulate General of India in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China signed on 29 November, 1996 in New Delhi provides the legal framework for the maintenance of our Consulate General in Hong Kong after the transfer of sovereignty to People's Republic of China on 30 June, 1997.

3. The Agreement on Cooperation for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Other Crimes signed on 29 November, 1996 provides for exchange of information and mutual cooperation in combating drug trafficking and other crimes.

4. The Agreement on Maritime Transport signed on 29 November, 1996 in New Delhi provides a framework for the development of maritime traffic between India and China.

Mongolia

1. The Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation signed in Ulaan Baatar on 16 September, 1996 provides the framework for expanding trade and economic cooperation between India and Mongolia.

2. The Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture signed on 16 September, 1996 provides the framework for bilateral cooperation in agriculture.

3. The Agreement in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources signed in Ulaan Baatar on 16 September, 1996 provides a framework for bilateral cooperation in geology and mineral resources.

Oman

1. The Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Commission for Combating Crime signed in Oman on 5 October, 1996 provides for mutual assistance in combating crime through exchange of information/data and assistance in investigation in the areas of trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, international organised crimes including terrorism, illegal

activities in the economic field and arms and ammunitions, smuggling of items of historical and cultural value and counterfeiting of travel documents etc.

2. The Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed on 5 October, 1996 in Oman provides for cooperation in science and technology through exchange of experts, information and data, holding of seminars and workshops, training and joint research projects

3. The Agreement on Cooperation in Agriculture and Allied Areas signed on 5 October, 1996 in Oman provides for joint activities in the areas of agricultural research, horticulture, soil conservation, irrigation, dairy development and food production and processing etc.

Yemen

1. The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors signed in New Delhi on 7 December, 1996 provides a framework for expanding cooperation in the field of agriculture, desertification and soil conservation. The MOU contains a provision for deputing Indian agricultural experts to Yemen to help draw up a plan of action in this area.

2. The Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology signed in New Delhi on 7 December, 1996 provides not only a mechanism for such cooperation but also an impetus to expand bilateral cooperation in this important area.

3. The agreement on Joint Business Council signed in New Delhi on 7 December, 1996 provides a forum for exchange of business information and increased interaction between business representatives of both sides.

Sudan

1. The Memorandum of Understanding for bilateral cooperation in the field of health signed in New Delhi on 13 October, 1996 enables cooperation and Indian assistance to Sudan in the critical areas of primary health care etc.

2. The Cultural Exchange Programme for 1996-98 signed on 9 August, 1996 under the overall Cultural Exchange Programme facilities the much needed cultural and social exchanges which will create goodwill and understanding between the people of both countries.

Tunisia

1. A workplan for cooperation in agricultural research for 1996-97 signed in New Delhi in October, 1996 provides for exchange of information and experts and optimum utilisation of agro technology by both the countries.

2. A Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 1996-98 signed in Tunis on 4 July, 1996 will facilitate social and cultural exchanges including bilateral visits by scholars, artists etc. in both countries.

Israel

1. The Memorandum of Understanding between National Small Industries Corporation of India and Small Business Authority of Israel signed in December, 1996 provides for cooperation in the area of small scale industry. India's expertise and Israel's experience will be placed at the disposal of parties of both countries through the nodal agencies which have signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

Slovak Republic

1. The Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology signed on 10 October, 1996 seeks to promote cooperation in the field of science and technology between the two countries.

2. The Agreement on Air Services between India and Slovak Republic signed on 10 October, 1996 provides the framework for future air links between the two countries.

Czech Republic

1. The Protocol on Consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic signed on 11 October, 1996 provides for regular consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries.

2. The Agreement for Promotion and Protection of Investments signed on 11 October, 1996 provides for mutual guarantees for protection of investments, repatriation of profits and a mechanism for dispute settlement.

3. The Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science signed on 11 October, 1996 is an umbrella agreement which provides for cooperation between the two countries in the areas of culture, education and science.

Poland

1. A Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Poland for the period 1997-1999 signed on 7 October, 1996 was concluded within the timeframe of Indo-Polish Cultural Agreement of 1957 and projects specific bilateral exchanges in education and learning, culture and arts, and mass media.

2. The Agreement on Promotion and Protection of investments signed on 7 October, 1996 provides mutual guarantees for protection of investments, repatriation of profits and a dispute settlement mechanism.

3. The Protocol on Consultations between Ministry of External Affairs of India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

of Poland signed on 7 October, 1996 provides for the regular consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries.

Slovenia

1. The Protocol on Consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia signed on 23 August, 1996 provides for regular consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries.

Russian Federation

1. The Agreement between Ministry of Defence of India and the Ministry of Defence of Russian Federation signed on 22 October, 1996 provides for intensifying bilateral cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries.

Bulgaria

1. The Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation signed on 4 December, 1996 updates the earlier agreement and provides the necessary framework for intensifying trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Kazakhstan

1. The Agreement for Promotion and Protection of Investments signed in New Delhi on 9 December, 1996 has provisions to promote Indian investments in Kazakhstan and reciprocally Kazakhstan investments in India as well as to safeguard these investments according to rules and regulations applicable in the two countries.

2. The Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and Capital signed on 9 December, 1996 has provisions to avoid double application of income tax on capital and income of Indian nationals in Kazakhstan and reciprocally Kazakh nationals in India. The Convention also has provisions to prevent evasion of payment of income tax by nationals of one country who are residents in the other.

Thailand

1. The Agreement between the Ministry of Human Resource Development of India and the Thai Ministry of Education signed on 18 October, 1996 provides for making suitable logistics, security and other arrangements for exposition in Thailand of the Holy Relics of the Lord Buddha and a photographic exhibition on the Buddhist sites and shrines in India.

Luxembourg

1. A Cultural agreement signed with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on 12 September, 1996 provides cooperation in several areas of Culture between India and Luxembourg.

Finland

1. A Protocol on Foreign Office consultations signed on 26 November, 1996 institutions consultation between the Foreign Offices to promote bilateral relations.

Comoros

1. A Protocol on Political, Trade, Economic, Cultural, Scientific and Technical Cooperation signed on 24 July, 1996 is an umbrella protocol between foreign Ministries of the two countries.

Mauritius

1. The Cultural Exchange Programme 1996-98, signed on 9 August, 1996 includes various proposals for cooperation between the two countries in the fields of education, arts and culture, youth and sports, women and child development for the period 1996-98.

2. A Memorandum of Understanding on Air Services signed on 27 August, 1996 permits Air Mauritius to operate one weekly service between Mauritius and Delhi on same terms and conditions as the services operated from Mauritius and Bombay.

Seychelles

1. The Agreement on Tourism Cooperation signed on 3 October, 1996 provides for development of tourism between India and Seychelles.

Zimbabwe

1. The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation for the development of small scale industries in Zimbabwe signed on 2 November, 1996 stipulates Zimbabwe would provide infrastructural support and India would provide technical expertise, equipment, training and personnel for small industries projects for 3 years.

Senegal

1. The Memorandum of Understanding on establishment of Entrepreneurship and Technical Development Centre in Senegal signed on 3 November, 1996 states that Senegal would provide infrastructural support and India would provide technical expertise, equipment, training and personnel for small industries projects for 3 years.

South Africa

1. The Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation signed on 4 December, 1996 provides that enterprises taxed in one country would not be taxed again in the other country.

2. The Agreement on Cultural Cooperation signed on 4 December, 1996 is an umbrella agreement on cooperation in education, culture, mass media etc.

3. A Memorandum of Understanding in the field of defence equipment signed on 4 December, 1996 provides for cooperation in defence related issues.